



GOVERNMENT

Ms. Harmon
2018-19

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course focuses primarily on the role of the United States Government in American society. We also study the state and local governments to a lesser degree. Students will gain knowledge of how government functions at all levels and develop citizenship skills to enable them to participate in the process. Students are encouraged to follow news about the government in newspapers, magazines, television, and the internet.

MAJOR TOPICS OF STUDY:

The course begins with a study of the principles underlying the U.S. Constitution. Subsequent units will focus on each of the three branches of government, political parties and elections, and the judicial system and rights of the accused.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Pen, pencil, and paper, and iPad EVERY DAY! Do not even approach me looking for these items.
- A separate notebook for Government. This can be either a three-ring binder or a spiral notebook; whichever works best for you. It must have pockets to organize handouts and returned assignments. The inside of your iPad cover does not count!

You are high school students. You should not need to be reminded everyday to bring the items above. I understand that you may slip up every now and then, but if not having supplies becomes a problem, “memory building” activities may be instituted.

GRADING SYSTEM:

- Homework: See Homework Policy on next page.
- The WHS Honor Code will be strictly enforced. Homework is to be done individually! Students are not to collaborate on any assignment unless given permission by me. This means you may not “work on homework together.” Violations of the honor code may result in forfeiting the right to earn exemption on final exams.
- Tests: Each unit will have a test. All students will be required to keep up on their study guide and turn it in completed the day of the test. These study guides will be returned at the end of the semester for final exam preparation. Before school review sessions will be offered for some tests, and participation is highly recommended.

NOTICE: If a student was absent on a day they would have taken a test, the student will make that test up the first day they return. Make-up tests are taken on the student’s time in the Testing Center. Students need to plan ahead for lunch and other activities. All tests must be completed in one sitting, unless prior arrangements have been made. Allow enough time to complete your test in one sitting.

- Students have 3 days to clear up an undocumented absence. Any absence that remains undocumented will result in zero for any work or test that was assigned or collected on the date of absence. If the absence is on a test day, the test will be assigned a 15% late penalty.
- Homework quizzes: We will occasionally have unannounced homework quizzes. These encourage students to read assignments rather than just answering the questions, as well as challenge the students to think about the material. Homework quizzes are daily grades.
- Make-up work: It is to your advantage to make up daily work as quickly as possible. The Student Handbook states that you are allowed one day for each day absent. I expect you to follow this rule. It is your responsibility to see me the day you return to find out what you missed. All students who were absent must check my website first before they approach me to find out what they missed. Many items are available for download on my website.
- Late work: Late work for required assignments will not be accepted. A grade of zero will be recorded for any work not in on time. Students may eliminate zeros on daily assignments by doing the next optional assignment. Zeros for copying or academic misconduct may not be eliminated. Major assignments will be accepted late, but will be assessed a penalty of 15 points per day.
- Extra credit: If I feel an opportunity is needed, I may offer optional assignments to the entire class that will be averaged in with your other grades. Bonus points may be awarded for work that is above and beyond what was required, as well as for bonus questions on tests. Individual extra credit assignments will not be offered.
- Averages:

Nine weeks averages will be computed as follows:

Test / Major Grades:	70%
Daily Assignments (Homework and Quizzes):	30%

Semester averages will be computed as follows:

Each nine weeks	40% a piece.	Final exam	20%
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Homework Policy for Government

HARMON

Purpose

- The main purpose of the policy is to help limit the amount of time students must spend doing homework, particularly when the student already has a solid understanding of the concepts. Students may choose to not do the “optional” homeworks if they feel they have a firm grasp of the material. This may also offer an opportunity for students to spend more time on another subject if they are struggling or have an upcoming test. However, students are responsible for knowing all material that is on every homework, whether they choose to complete it or not.
- A secondary purpose will be to help prepare students for a similar policy if they plan to attend college. College students are expected to do readings and assignments, yet very few of those are collected and graded by professors. Each student must decide if they understand the material well enough to skip the reading and get the information from attending class. This policy in Government class will allow students to do the same thing.

Policy

- No homework assignment is truly "optional." Students are expected to do every one, and will be held accountable for all of the information on every assignment. However, not all homeworks will be collected and/or graded. Students will know in advance whether or not an assignment is “required” or “not required/optional” for a grade.
- Students who do the assignment will receive credit for doing so. Those who choose not to do the assignment will not receive a zero; the skyward grade book will show an * for every optional assignment that was not completed. However, a student’s decision to not do an assignment is final; they may not turn it in later for a grade.
- All students will be required to take notes on the homework when we review it in class.
- If a student's overall average drops below an acceptable level, all homeworks may become required for that student in an effort to raise that student’s average.
- Students who do less than 50% of the non-required homeworks will not be eligible to do any extra credit assignments that might be offered.

Additional Information

- This policy is a work in progress, and subject to change. However, changes will not be retroactive (i.e. a non-required assignment becoming required after the fact).
- Students should preview each assignment to see if they can answer the questions without reading it. If they cannot, they should consider doing the assignment.
- Students are encouraged to do as many of the non-required homeworks as possible. This will help raise their overall homework average and help protect against poor grades on required homeworks and quizzes.

CLASS RULES:

- First and foremost, get involved, participate, and have fun! Much of this class will involve in-depth discussions of events and concepts. Getting involved will not only better your understanding of the material, but also make the class much more enjoyable for everyone.
- Bring all of your materials everyday (see materials needed). You will not be permitted to go to your locker to get them. There can be rewards for doing this, and there may be penalties for failure to do so.
- Plan to stay the entire period. Valuable information or discussions could be missed if you are out of the class. Restroom visits, drinks, and going to your locker should be taken care of during the 6 minute passing period or at lunch.
- Cell phones: We will follow the district policy regarding cell phone usage in class.
- We will use the iPads often. However, they must remain closed and out of sight if we are not using them during a lesson.
- Smile, be pleasant, and share with me anything you are doing outside of class, like sporting events, hobbies, or interesting news.

CONTACTING ME:

By far, the best way to communicate with me is by email. I check it many times a day, and have it forwarded home. I do check my voicemail daily, but not as frequently. Please do not hesitate to contact me about anything, and I'm looking forward to having a great year!

Natalie Harmon

Email: nharmon@eanesisd.net

WHS Phone Extension: 33912

Conference period: 1st period (8:50AM-9:40AM)
